



The President's Daily Brief

27 July 1970

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THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

27 July 1970

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

Recent developments in Cambodia are discussed on Page 1.

Jordan avoided committing itself on the question of fedayeen adherence to a cease-fire in accepting the US peace proposal. (Page 3)

South Vietnamese political developments and North Vietnamese infiltration are discussed on Page 4.

Soviet [redacted] Israel [redacted]
(Page 5)

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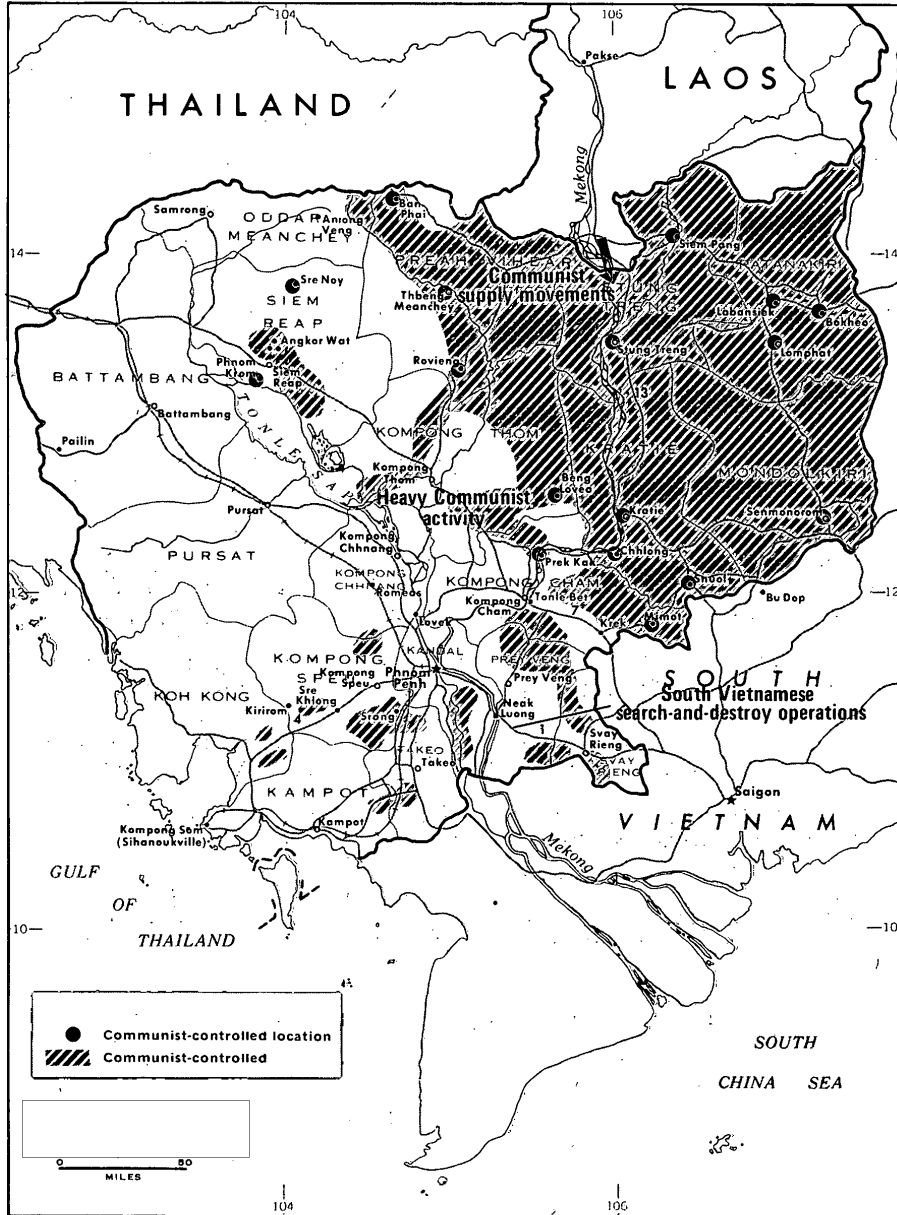
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Italy's Emilio Colombo has been asked to form a center-left cabinet. (Page 6)

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Cambodia: Current Situation



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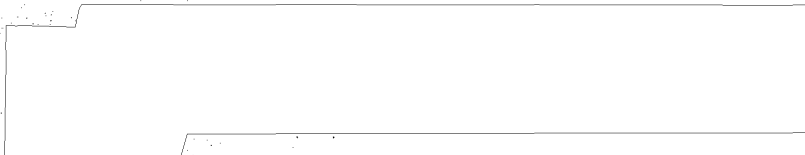
CAMBODIA

The Communists continue to concentrate on small-scale attacks against isolated government positions rather than embark on any major military engagements. Action is centered in the flooded region south of the Tonle Sap between Kompong Chhnang and Kompong Thom cities. The Communists attacked a village at the mouth of the Tonle Sap yesterday and reportedly are infiltrating other villages in the area.

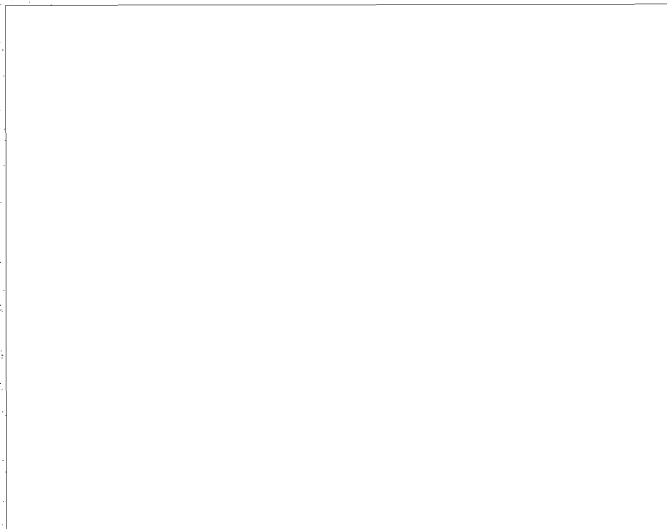
In the east, a 2,500-man South Vietnamese task force entered Cambodia on 26 July on a search-and-destroy mission along Route 1 linking Saigon and Phnom Penh. It has made only light contact with the enemy.

The Communists have made another attempt to interdict Route 4 linking Phnom Penh with the seaport of Kompong Som. US Embassy officers, who visited Kompong Som on 25 July, report that the seaport was quiet. Despite the city's strategic importance, few security precautions have been taken. Government officials claim that the nearest Communist elements are 60 miles down the coast.

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Under pressure from the government, Sihanouk's mother, Queen Kossamak, has finally vacated the royal palace. The move is another step toward the abolishment of the monarchy, to which the Lon Nol government is all but committed. The monarchy has considerable potential for serving as a rallying point for the Cambodian people--particularly in the tradition-oriented rural areas--but Lon Nol has been under pressure from "progressive" elements to declare Cambodia a republic.

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JORDAN

After a day-long cabinet meeting, Foreign Minister Rifai announced last night that Jordan accepts the US peace proposal. How the government plans to enforce fedayeen compliance, however, is not clear; pro-fedayeen cabinet ministers reportedly held out for exclusion of the fedayeen from any cease-fire.

By referring to the "lawful and acknowledged right of self-defense and resistance against the occupation" of the armed Palestinian exiles in Jordan, the reply left open the possibility of independent fedayeen action against the Israeli-occupied west bank of the Jordan River. Any overt attempt to block off fedayeen cross-border activity would meet with stubborn fedayeen resistance and could re-ignite the near - civil war that raged for a week in early June. King Husayn might be willing to clamp down on the fedayeen to a considerable extent,

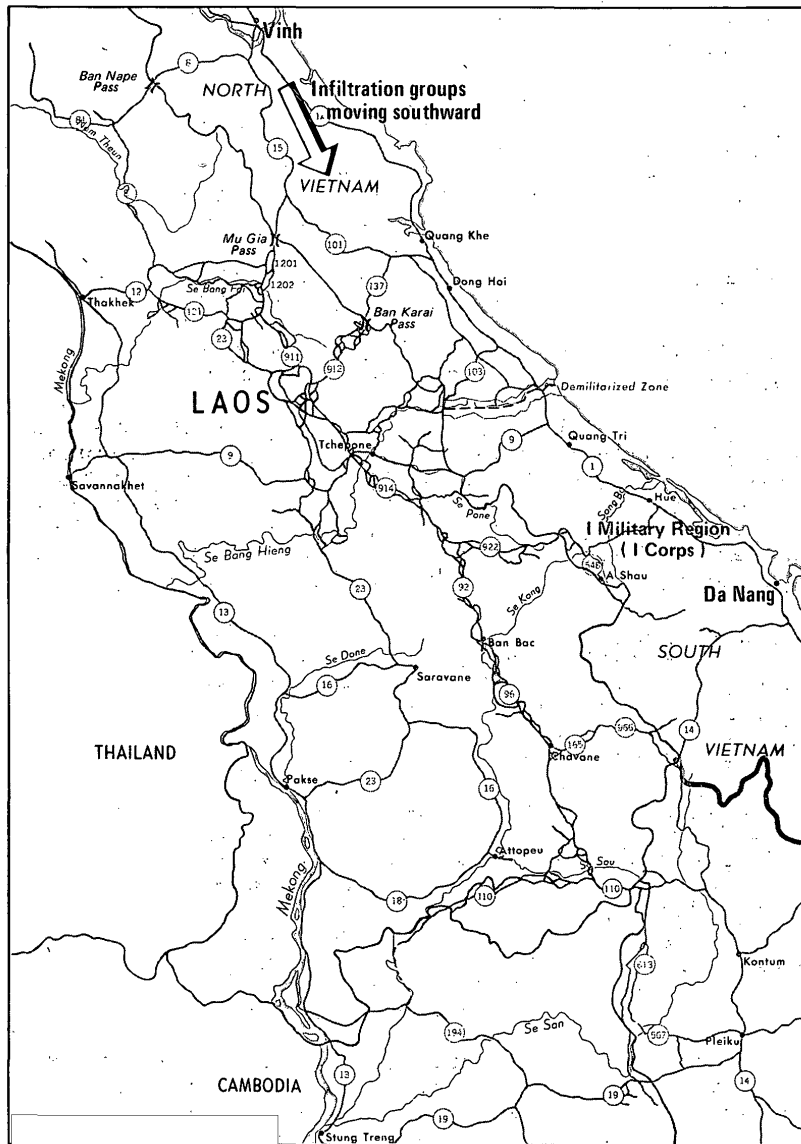
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New North Vietnamese Infiltration Detected



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SOUTH VIETNAM

In a meeting with Saigon newspaper publishers on 23 July, President Thieu said his country is now willing to accept an immediate cease-fire that could be followed by negotiations to reach a political settlement. Thieu stated, however, that the Communists would have to stop their infiltration and terrorism first, and that the cease-fire would have to be internationally supervised.

This is the first time Thieu has publicly suggested a cease-fire in which both sides would "stand still wherever they are." Until now, he has insisted that any cease-fire must be a part of an over-all peace settlement negotiated before the cease-fire could take effect.

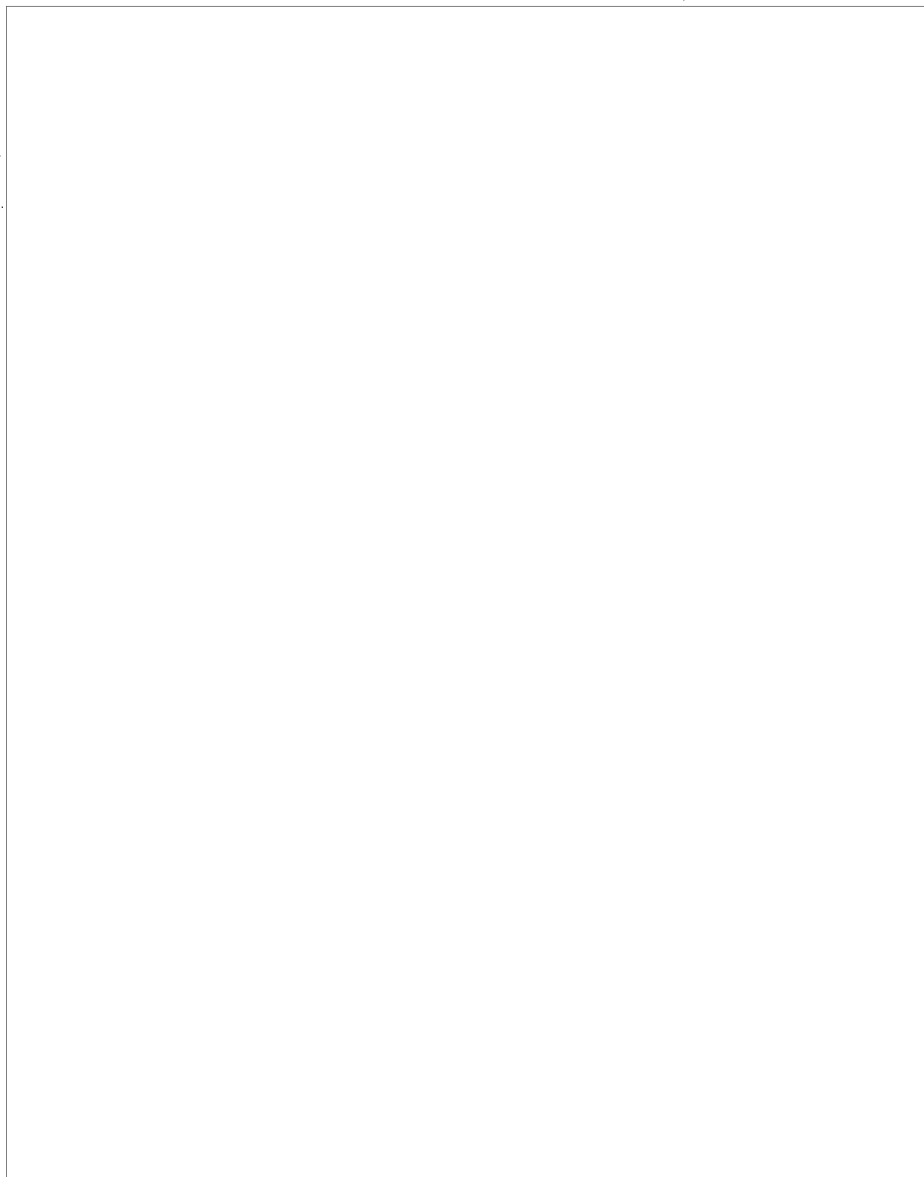
Thieu is probably confident that the Communists will reject this proposal as they did the one last year suggesting elections. He reportedly advised the publishers that he doubted the Communists would accept such a cease-fire because "they hardly have any place to stay." This comment reflects his confidence that the government is in a relatively strong position in much of the countryside despite local Communist resurgence in some provinces.

* * *

Since 23 July, three new battalion-sized infiltration groups totaling some 1,700 troops have been detected moving south in the lower panhandle of North Vietnam. They are probably heading for the area stretching south from Da Nang. A North Vietnamese intercept late last week claimed that personnel would be moving south through the Vinh area in the panhandle "in great numbers" from 20 July until about 2 August. Other recent intercepts, however, have indicated that some of these will be only small infiltration groups, probably consisting of specialists rather than infantry.

This is the largest group noted this month and only the sixth since the dry season infiltration cycle tapered off in April. If the North Vietnamese continue beyond this limited surge of activity to dispatch many large groups, it will be in sharp contrast to last year, when infiltration remained only a trickle throughout the summer. These new battalion-sized groups could reflect enemy intentions to step up offensive activity in the provinces south of Da Nang as well.

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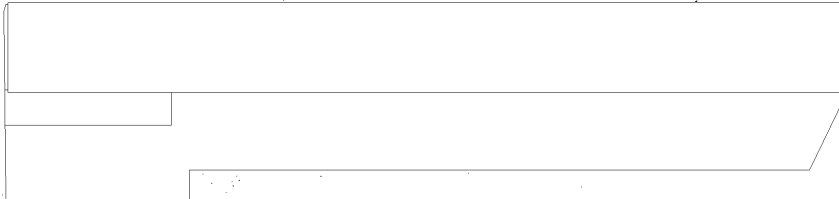
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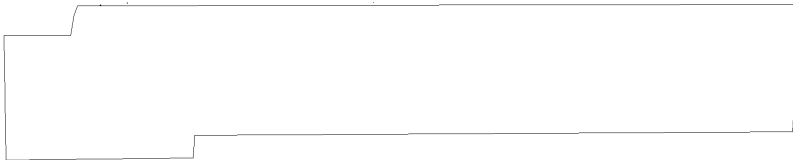


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NOTES

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Italy: President Saragat has asked the respected economist and lawyer Emilio Colombo to try to form a center-left cabinet and end the most recent of Italy's political crises. Colombo was finance minister in the last cabinet of Mariano Rumor and in seven previous governments. There is no reason to believe that he will be any more successful in bringing the two Socialist parties together and in healing the rift in the coalition than his predecessor Giulio Andreotti, who gave up late last week.

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